

The Community Farm
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES
December 2024

Key Acronyms and Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under 18
- **DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Team Member** – Staff, Volunteers and Management Committee
- **LADO** - Local Authority Designated Officer
- **SEND** - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- **FGM** – Female Genital Mutilation

Policy statement

The Community Farm is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children at risk who use our services. We believe safeguarding is everyone's business. Safeguarding is a specific activity that is undertaken to protect specific children and adults at risk who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Additionally, The Community Farm is committed to keeping our staff and volunteers protected in the workplace. This includes protection from abuse from both colleagues and clients.

This document sets out The Community Farm's approach to protecting children at risk from abuse. It is supported by detailed procedures which describe how this policy is to be carried out by all team members to include all Team Members. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Everyone who The Community Farm works with will be informed of our policy statement as part of an explanation of the limits of confidentiality.

Confidentiality in this respect refers to the requirement not to share anything about anyone without their consent to anyone outside of The Community Farm. A copy of this Policy and Procedure is made available as appropriate and is also available on The Community Farm's website. It is vital that information is shared with relevant individuals within the organisation so that the safest decisions are made.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a specific activity that is undertaken to protect specific children and adults with care and support needs who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, harm.

What is abuse?

Abuse and neglect of children includes

- **Physical abuse** - any form of assault, over-medication, restraint, poor moving and handling practice, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- **Sexual abuse** - Forced sexual activity involving physical contact, including rape and sexual assault by penetration, non-penetrative acts and non-contact acts, that was not actively consented to or the person did not have the capacity to understand./
- **Psychological / emotional abuse** - threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment.
- **Neglect** - ignoring medical or physical needs, not providing access to appropriate care, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate food, water and heating.

- **Exploitation** – – coercion of a child into sexual activity in exchange for something and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator, which may involve physical contact, and/or occur using technology.
- **Modern slavery and trafficking** - recruiting and moving children from one part of the UK to another or into the UK from overseas. Children may be trafficked for child sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, forced labour including domestic labour and criminal exploitation.
- **Children as victims of domestic abuse** – a child or young person (under the age of 18) who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of abuse. (Reference Domestic Abuse Act 2021).

The Community Farm actions

The Community Farm will:

1. Ensure that all Team Members have a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks relevant to the work they undertake and are precluded from involvement in the organisation as appropriate.
2. Provide clear and detailed procedures on decision-making, accountability and recording of child safeguarding situations.
3. Provide thorough and effective training to Team Members on child safeguarding policies and procedures. All new Team Members will familiarise themselves with The Community Farm's safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff will be required to review the safeguarding policies and procedures annually, to be monitored as part of the bi-annual review process.
4. Appoint a member of staff to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Management Committee Member to be the Safeguarding Advisor.
5. Provide regular and consistent supervision and support to Team Members, focusing on the safety and welfare of everyone visiting The Community Farm.
6. Ensure that the organisation can learn from specific child safeguarding situations and review policy and procedures as a result.
7. Maintain a current knowledge of child safeguarding procedures nationally and within the Bath and North East Somerset area.
8. Review this policy and procedure at least once a year and always following a serious incident.

In addition;

Team Members will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made and kept up to date.

- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents/carers and children appropriately.

No referrals will be made to external agencies in respect of suspected abuse of a child without prior discussion and agreement from the manager of that team or the DSL. However, if it is an emergency, the emergency services should be called immediately, and the appropriate Manager informed as soon as possible.

All internal and external discussions about specific safeguarding situations need to be recorded by the Team Member, regardless of the eventual action taken.

Role description for Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Managing Director

Responsible for:

- Being the main contact within The Community Farm in relation to child and adult safeguarding.
- Availability for The Community Farm Team Members, in the absence of their line manager, to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- Being named contact for Child and Adult Safeguarding Services.
- Ensuring notes are maintained and updated.
- Discussing safeguarding with Safeguarding Advisors from safeguarding teams in local authorities.
- Oversight of The Community Farm's safeguarding training and induction programme.
- Ensuring that policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are up-to-date and reflect best practice and current guidelines.
- Ensuring that the Senior Team are informed of formal safeguarding referrals.
- Reporting safeguarding referrals and serious safeguarding incidents to The Community Farm's Management Committee, Funders and Partners as appropriate.
- Ensure that appropriate procedures are followed when it is identified that a Team Member is not applying this policy to a satisfactory standard and that any related current risks are safeguarded accordingly.

Not responsible for:

- Making all necessary safeguarding referrals.

Arrangements during absence:

Planned absence: Team Members are informed as to which Manager/ Safeguarding Champion is the named DSL during the absence period.

Short-term unplanned absence: The role of Designated Safeguarding Lead is held by the Assistant Managing Director in the absence of the DSL.

Safeguarding procedures

This document sets out what action will be taken if it is suspected that an adult at risk is at risk of harm, through abuse or neglect.

General procedure

The DSL for The Community Farm is the Managing Director.

No Team Member will be expected to make a decision regarding the safeguarding of adults alone. No Team Member should make a referral regarding an adult who may be at risk or break confidentiality without the agreement of their Team Leader/Manager.

Confidentiality in this respect refers to the requirement not to share anything about anyone without their consent to anyone outside of The Community Farm. It is vital that information is shared within the organisation so that the safest decisions are made.

Maintaining confidentiality is a vital part of the ethos of the organisation and generally, this can be assured. However, if a Team Member has reason to believe that an adult may be at risk of harm, the responsibility to safeguard that adult overrides the right to confidentiality. Team Members **MUST** break confidentiality if necessary, in these circumstances.

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will only be shared with relevant people.

Generally, The Community Farm works on the basis of consent and attempts to work with people to seek external support themselves. In many situations consent to take action to safeguard an adult can be sought from the person concerned and will be given, but consent must not be sought if it may place someone at greater risk.

If a safeguarding concern is raised the team member should consult the activity leader or their line manager. DSL will be informed at the earliest opportunity. If they are not available the Assistant Managing Director will be consulted.

Breaching confidentiality

Unless it is an emergency, confidentiality will only be breached by a member of staff when authorised by the DSL (or Assistant Managing Director in the absence of DSL) This decision will be made in conjunction with the DSL if possible, within the required timescale.

Consulting the LADO

If The Community Farm hear about a safeguarding concern that involves an adult who works with children or adults at risk the designated Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be consulted as soon as practically possible.

Referral procedure

Safeguarding referrals can only be made where The Community Farm has sufficient information about the person concerned (one or more of the following: name, address, contact details, date of birth, parent/carer's name). The following procedures should be adhered to:

- A Team Member may be given direct information about an adult with care and support needs who is currently at risk of significant harm, or they may be given information which leads them to a professional judgement that an adult is being harmed or is at risk of harm.
- The Team Member with immediate concerns about safeguarding should consult with their line manager immediately. If their line manager is unavailable, they should consult the DSL. If possible, a discussion with the person who made the disclosure will then take place. If the person making a disclosure is an adult they will be strongly encouraged to contact Adult Social Care themselves (with support from The Community Farm). If this is not completed within the agreed timeframe, The Community Farm will contact Adult Social Care. All discussions and subsequent decisions will be recorded at the earliest possible opportunity, and within 24 hours. Where the adult is not at immediate risk the line manager/DSL will be consulted at the earliest possible opportunity (not more than 24 hours) and the procedures will be followed as above.
- If there is consent from the primary client/parent/carer to make a referral then the local procedures should be followed immediately e.g., telephone referral by the Team Member or Manager and followed up in writing within 24 hours, or by completing an Early Help Assessment. Where a disclosure has been made to a Volunteer, the referral will be made by their manager. Contact details for the relevant services for each area are at the end of this document.
- **If there is no consent** from the person concerned, the DSL will decide whether to break confidentiality and make a referral. The Team Member will either be present at the discussion meeting, or they will be informed of decisions within 24 hours. Details will be recorded and a referral made as above. Outcomes

The DSL will inform the Team Member of the outcome of the referral, and this will be communicated to the primary client/parent/carer if they are still in contact.

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Situations where no referral is possible may still leave Team Members with uncomfortable feelings and these should ideally be discussed in person with the Team Manager or DSL and/or at supervision meetings.

Whistle blowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations to the people who use our service, employees, or the wider community.

Allegations made against The Community Farm Team Members

If an allegation of abuse is made against a Team Member, the referral procedures above will be followed to safeguard the adult at risk.

If the information regarding risk to an adult relates to abuse by a member of The Community Farm the DSL should immediately be informed in the first instance, or if the allegation concerns the DSL the Team Member should speak directly to the Chair of the Management Committee. The Team Member should not discuss the allegations with other Team Members. The DSL will ensure that the person reporting the allegation has appropriate practical and emotional support in place, signposting externally where appropriate.

The DSL will immediately consult the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and follow actions as agreed.

The DSL and the Chair of the Management Committee will immediately inform the individual concerned that they are suspended from duties pending investigation. This is not an assumption of guilt but serves to allow the appropriate investigation to take place and protects the Team Member from further allegations.

The scope of the investigation will be determined by the nature of the concern and all investigations will be thorough and impartial.

Record keeping

Details of the initial safeguarding raised must be recorded by the Team Member that identified the concern. All subsequent discussions, actions and decisions must be updated by the Team Member involved in that particular action. All records will be recorded at the earliest opportunity, and within 24 hours.

All records must be:

1. Accurate, to include

- The date/time of the disclosure.
 - The date/time of the initial report.
 - The name/contact details and role of the person to whom the concern was initially reported
 - The names, and where relevant and legal, the contact details of all parties involved including witnesses.
2. Factual, to include
- A clear factual report of the initial concern/disclosure. This will include what has been seen, heard or said. All reports must be recorded with the date and Team Member's name.
 - A clear dated record of all further action taken.
 - If relevant, the reasons why a concern was not referred to a statutory agency.
3. Separate opinion or judgement
- It is acceptable to have an informed opinion or judgement, but this must be clearly stated as opinion. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged must be clearly recorded as such.
 - Records must be written mindful that people may request access to any records kept about them.

Record retention periods

All records are kept in accordance with The General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) as laid out in The Community Farm's Privacy and Data Protection Policy.

Staff support

The Community Farm recognises that working with trauma can impact staff and that this can be particularly relevant when working with safeguarding concerns. The Community Farm will support staff by providing regular debriefing and, where necessary and appropriate, offering additional wellbeing support.

Appendix 1: Children Act 1989 and 2004

Section 17 and 47 of the 1989 Act imposed a positive duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Section 17	Section 47
<p>A child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may also be: children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), young carers, children who have committed a crime or whose parents are in prison, or asylum-seeking children.</p> <p>Under Section 17 Social Care are obliged to identify needs for services and to make arrangement for services to be provided by others such as voluntary groups.</p> <p>Anyone who has concerns about a child’s wellbeing or safety can contact Social Care. This can be anonymous if a member of the public is worried about giving their name.</p> <p>Professionals do not have anonymity rights as their duty of care overrides this.</p>	<p>Under Section 47 Social Care are obliged to make all necessary enquiries when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.</p> <p>This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.</p> <p>Significant harm refers to physical and mental health and development. Impairment, ill treatment or abuse includes anything that prevents a child being safe and which interferes with their health or development in any sphere of life: physical, emotional, social, intellectual. So, it covers all the main types of abuse including, physical, sexual, psychological/emotional, neglect and exploitation</p> <p>Harm is ‘significant’ if the child is in actual danger or if the child’s health or development is suffering when compared to that which could be reasonably expected of a similar child.</p> <p>E.g., a child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity – so knowledge that a sexual act had occurred would always lead to enquiries. Significant harm is easier to identify in physical or contact sexual abuse.</p>

Appendix 2: Relevant contacts

South West Child Protection <https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/> offer a clear guide and step by step approach to what to do if you are concerned about a child or young person under 18 in any of the Avon and Somerset localities.

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, the Police should be telephoned on 101 at any time (or in emergencies on 999).

Referral pathways and contacts by area
B&NES
Referral Concerned about a child or young person (bathnes.gov.uk) If the child already has a social worker email ChildCare_Duty@bathnes.gov.uk Advice (Social Care) 01225 396111 or 01225 477929 Emergency Duty Out of Hours 01454 615165

Further Useful Contacts:

- NSPCC 24 hour Helpline for adults concerned about a child, including if a child is involved in or at risk from gangs, or radicalisation: 0800 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- Childline 24 hours Helpline for children/young people: 0800 1111
- NSPCC FGM Helpline 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
- NSPCC Helpline extension to report abuse related to the Church of England, the service offers advice and statutory referrals. Information will only be shared if the referrer gives express permission: 0800 80 20 20 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- NSPCC dedicated helpline details can be found here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/>
- CEOP Child Exploitation and Online Protection provide information about online sexual abuse <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>